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Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia

I. Introduction

1. In its presidential statement of 31 October 2001 (S/PRST/2001/30), the Security Council requested me to submit reports, at least every four months, on the situation in Somalia and the efforts to promote the peace process, including updates on the scope and contingency planning for launching a peace-building mission for Somalia.

2. The present report covers the period since my last report on this subject, dated 26 February 2003 (S/2003/231). It provides an update on the progress made and the support given by the international community, in particular by the United Nations system, to the ongoing Somali national reconciliation process at Mbagathi, Kenya, under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and its Kenyan chairmanship. The report also covers political developments, humanitarian conditions and the security situation in Somalia, as well as the humanitarian and development activities of United Nations programmes and agencies concerning Somalia, including measures taken in response to resolution 1425 (2002) of 22 July 2002.

II. Somali national reconciliation process

3. Kenya's new Special Envoy for Somalia, Bethuel Kiplagat, has undertaken several initiatives to strengthen and restructure the reconciliation process. He has set up a Somali arbitration committee, whose 15 members comprise 3 persons from each clan, including minorities, to handle the persistent problems relating to representation at the conference. In order to help harmonize the reports of the six reconciliation committees, he also set up a technical harmonization committee composed of Somali experts. As indicated in my last report, these committees have been working on draft texts on federalism and a provisional charter; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; land and property rights; economic recovery, institution-building and resource mobilization; conflict resolution and reconciliation; and regional and international relations. Some members of the Somali Leaders Committee objected to the establishment of the technical harmonization committee, preferring instead to handle the harmonization effort at the political level. This issue is yet to be settled. Mr. Kiplagat has also succeeded in reducing the overall costs of the Somalia national Reconciliation Conference by

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more than half through the reduction of the number of delegates and personnel and the relocation of the Conference from Eldoret to Mbagathi, near Nairobi.

4. The Kenyan Minister for Foreign Affairs launched the plenary of the second phase of the Conference on 14 May 2003. In June the plenary is expected to endorse by consensus the reports prepared by the six reconciliation committees. Soon thereafter, the third phase of the Conference is expected to select an all-inclusive Government. Most of the 360 Somali delegates participated in the launching event, which was given wide press coverage and was attended by representatives of the international community.

5. While the Transitional National Government, as represented by its Prime Minister and the Speaker of the Transitional National Assembly, as well as many other leaders belonging to the Somalia Reconciliation and Restoration Council and representing "Puntland", continued their active participation in the Conference, other leaders, including Mohamed Qanyare Afrah, Musse Sudi "Yallahow", Osman Hassan Ali "Atto", Omar Mahmud Mohamed "Finish" from Mogadishu and Barre Aden Shire "Hirale" of the Juba Valley Alliance, based in Kismayo, were absent from the Conference for almost two months. Many of these leaders returned to Mbagathi for the start of the plenary of the second phase of the Conference.

6. On 11 March the Deputy Speaker of the Transitional National Assembly, at that time acting as the leader of the Transitional National Government delegation at the Conference, accused Ethiopia of amassing troops on its border with Somalia and of crossing into the country at several locations. He demanded that Ethiopia be excluded from the IGAD Technical Committee overseeing the reconciliation process, presently composed of the Frontline States (Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya) and the IGAD secretariat. In a similar vein, the Chairman of the Rahanwein Resistance Army (RRA), Colonel Hassan Mohamed Nur "Shatigadud", issued a statement on 23 March protesting that one of his former deputies, who has opposed him militarily in recent months, was accompanying a two-man IGAD monitoring delegation to Baidoa. He also accused Ethiopia of disrupting progress in the reconciliation process and of encouraging new rounds of fighting in Somalia. Ethiopia denied these allegations and reiterated its commitment to peace in Somalia.

7. Following the decision of the Foreign Ministers of the Frontline States to establish a committee to monitor implementation of the Eldoret Declaration (S/2002/1359, annex), comprising IGAD, the African Union, the United Nations, the European Commission, the League of Arab States and some IGAD Partners Forum member States, the Ceasefire Monitoring Committee, at its first meeting, on 4 March, addressed the escalation of hostilities in Somalia, in particular the fighting in the Medina district of Mogadishu between the militias of Musse Sudi "Yallahow" and Omar Mahmud Mohamed "Finish", as well as the fighting at Buale in the Juba Valley (see paras. 27 and 28 below). The Committee condemned the violence and called on all parties to desist from fighting.

8. Kenya has provided a retired General to serve as an adviser to the Committee, and the African Union has agreed to provide military personnel to serve as monitors in support of the Committee. A working group of the Committee, composed of IGAD, the African Union, Ethiopia, the League of Arab States, the European Commission, Sweden and the United Nations, has been established as an advisory body to the IGAD Technical Committee on issues pertaining to its monitoring tasks. My Representative has been participating in the Committees as an observer.

9. On 6 March the Presidency of the European Union (Greece) issued a statement condemning all violations of the Eldoret Declaration. On 19 April the League of Arab States issued a statement calling on the Somali leaders to adhere to the Declaration and to accelerate their efforts to reach a political settlement to the Somali crisis. They also called on international and regional organizations to cooperate with the League of Arab States in establishing a programme aimed at restoring security to Somalia through the disarmament of the militias.

10. The decision to hold monthly meetings of the Foreign Ministers of the Frontline States (see S/2003/231, para. 31) has not been implemented, leaving the issue of the non-participation of "Somaliland" in the reconciliation process yet to be discussed at that level. Some Somali leaders have underlined that the absence of "Somaliland" from the reconciliation process will seriously undermine the process. It was hoped that the challenges faced in the ongoing Somali national reconciliation process would be discussed at the tenth IGAD Summit, which was scheduled to take place from 23 to 27 April in Kampala. However, the Summit was also postponed.

III. Activities of the United Nations

11. My Representative and the United Nations Political Office for Somalia continue to actively monitor and support the reconciliation process, while the country team and its partners have intensified operational efforts to contribute to peace-building and reconciliation inside Somalia. My Representative meets regularly with Somali leaders, IGAD representatives and donors, in particular the IGAD Partners Forum, in order to help make the reconciliation process as inclusive as possible and to coordinate the international community's support for the process. In mid-May, in view of the apparently high expectations of a future United Nations role in Somalia among those involved in the Conference, a senior officer from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations joined the Mbagathi team of the United Nations Political Office for Somalia for a week to clarify to the Somali parties and the IGAD mediation team the requirements and parameters for possible United Nations assistance in implementing an eventual peace plan for Somalia, particularly regarding ceasefire monitoring and demilitarization and demobilization.

12. In accordance with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) of 31 October 2000, the United Nations has continued to support the mainstreaming of a gender perspective and women's human rights issues at the Conference and has provided a gender expert to work with the IGAD mediation team. The establishment of a women's resource centre for information, dialogue and negotiation has provided women delegates with the much-needed practical support to enhance their efforts. Somali women delegates developed and compiled a lobbying document on gender issues for discussion at the Conference. The key issues raised include affirmative action, special measures on women's representation, women's access to and control over resources, and the impact of war on women and girls.

13. At a United Nations workshop organized for key Somali business leaders from 24 to 26 May 2003, at the request of Mr. Kiplagat, the Somali business community requested its participation in the work of the Conference and expressed its willingness to support the outcome of the Somali national reconciliation process.

14. Two meetings of the Somalia Contact Group were held during the current reporting period, one in New York on 14 March, chaired by the Under-Secretary-

General for Political Affairs, and the other in Nairobi on 27 March, chaired by my Representative. At the latter meeting, Mr. Kiplagat reported on the progress being made and the challenges faced in the reconciliation process, and the need for increased international support for the peace process in Somalia was reiterated.

15. The Panel of Experts established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1425 (2002) submitted its report (S/2003/223) on 25 March 2003. In accordance with resolution 1474 (2003) of 8 April 2003, by which the Council decided to re-establish the Panel of Experts, I appointed the Panel's four members, including the Chairman, on 30 April 2003 (see S/2003/515). The Panel began its work on 12 May and it is scheduled to provide a mid-term briefing to the Council in August.

16. At its fifty-ninth session the Commission on Human Rights decided to extend the mandate of the independent expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia, Ghanim Alnajjar, for a further year and, inter alia, welcomed the progress achieved at the Mbagathi Conference.

IV. Developments inside Somalia

17. On 27 March 2003 the President of the Transitional National Government, Abdikassim Salad Hassan, and some faction leaders based in Mogadishu held a meeting. Citing the lack of progress at the Mbagathi Conference, they stated that it was their intention to proceed with efforts at restoring security in Mogadishu and to convene a Somali national reconciliation conference inside Somalia.

18. On 31 March, in the company of a number of Somali leaders who had continued their participation at the Mbagathi Conference, Hussein Aidid, at a press conference in Nairobi, strongly denounced the Mogadishu meeting as divisive. He urged the Somalia leaders meeting in Mogadishu to end their parallel endeavours and to proceed to Mbagathi. However, the Prime Minister's Office in Mogadishu reportedly told the press that the Mogadishu meeting was not intended to be an alternative to the Mbagathi Conference but a consultative meeting to discuss ways of bringing stability and security to the Somali capital.

19. Reports indicate that disagreements have emerged between President Hassan, who has remained in Mogadishu, and the Prime Minister and the Speaker of the Transitional National Assembly, who are leading the Transitional National Government delegation at the Mbagathi Conference. Differences on how the reconciliation process should proceed have also been reported among members of the delegation. The Prime Minister is reported to have dismissed the Commerce Minister and the Minister of State for Disarmament and Demobilization in April for failing to adhere to the policy of the Transitional National Government at the Conference. On 26 May the Prime Minister returned to Mogadishu for consultations.

20. After an eight-month recess, the Transitional National Assembly reconvened its fifth session on 28 April with 165 out of the 245 members present. The Assembly had been unable to meet, ostensibly because most of its members were at the Mbagathi Conference. The reconvened Assembly has been debating the possibilities of reviewing the Transitional National Charter, with the aim of extending the Transitional National Government's term of office beyond August 2003, when its three-year term expires.

21. "Presidential elections" took place in "Somaliland" on 14 April 2003. The three candidates representing three political parties were "Somaliland's" incumbent "president", Dahir Riyale Kahin of the Allied People's Democratic Party (UDUB); Ahmad Muhammad Silanyo, a veteran politician of the Solidarity Party (Kulmiye); and Faysal Ali Warabe, a civil engineer from the diaspora, of the Justice and Welfare Party (UCID). On 19 April the "National Electoral Commission" announced that incumbent "president" Dahir Riyale Kahin had won the election by a margin of 80 votes out of almost 500,000 cast. The Kulmiye Party rejected the results, questioning their accuracy and contending that political pressure had been exerted on the Commission.

22. Reports indicate that the polls were conducted in a peaceful manner, with trained "Somaliland" observers present at polling stations. There was no official international monitoring of the elections. However, representatives of South African non-governmental organizations and the Inter-Africa Group, as well as Addis Ababa- and Nairobi-based diplomats from Canada, Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America were present.

23. On 11 May the "Somaliland" High Court announced the official results, amending the figures released earlier by the Commission and placing UDUB in the lead by 217 votes. The Chairman of the Kulmiye party rejected the figures and reiterated that he would accept neither the Commission's results nor the High Court's decision. On 16 May Dahir Riyale Kahin and his deputy, Ahmad Yusuf Yasin, were sworn into office by the president of the "Somaliland" High Court. Meanwhile, the House of Elders extended the tenure of the House of Representatives for two years and its own term for three years.

24. In "Puntland", Colonel Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed and his opponents participated in a reconciliation conference in Bossasso, involving 300 representatives from both sides, to end the conflict between his administration and the "Puntland" Salvation Movement, led by General Ade Muse Hirse. The latter is an ally of Jama Ali Jama, who was a rival claimant to the "Puntland" presidency. The two sides entered into a power-sharing agreement on 17 May. Reports indicate that Mr. Jama, although not part of the peace process, has welcomed the agreement, which was the outcome of a mediation effort by two prominent elders from Sanaag.

Security

25. While security conditions in "Somaliland" and "Puntland" remained calm during the current reporting period, the border dispute with regard to Sool and Sanaag districts continues to cause tensions between the two administrations.

26. Security conditions in southern Somalia continue to be a serious concern, with no clear local authority in many areas that could control the activities of bandits who extort money from travellers and merchants and where clan feuds continue to claim lives. In March humanitarian staff had to be withdrawn from southern Mudug and Galgudud due to fighting between the Abgal and Habr Gedir subclans. Fighting between RRA factions persists around Baidoa, with militias continuing to lay mines and carrying out raids into the town. On 10 April some 27 people were killed by a mine explosion on the Baidoa-Dinsor road and in subsequent fighting between the Leysan and Garewale clans. Baidoa and the areas within 40 kilometres of the town remain off limits to all United Nations staff due to insecurity. On 14 May a driver of

a car hired by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) was killed in Kismayo in a dispute between Marehan and Galjeel militias. The incident occurred during a tour of the city by two international humanitarian staff.

27. Access to the Gedo region by humanitarian agencies has been difficult due to intra-Marehan fighting. While tensions remain, fighting between the Bartire and Aulehan clans in the Juba Valley for control of the Buale district has subsided. Peace talks supported by businessmen, clan elders and religious groups are under way in Buale. The conflict claimed numerous lives and led to the displacement of people as well as the temporary closure of one of the few bridges across the Juba River. Buale also remains off limits to all United Nations staff due to insecurity.

28. The situation in Mogadishu remains unpredictable and dangerous, and access to the city for humanitarian agencies is very limited. National humanitarian staff conduct operations depending on the security situation. Abgal intra-clan clashes and fighting between militias loyal to Musse Sudi "Yallahow" and Omar Mahmud Mohamed "Finish" for control of the Medina district of Mogadishu resulted in several casualties in February and March. The Mogadishu seaport and airport remain closed. Crime is still a very significant problem in the city, with many reports of kidnappings, robberies, hijackings and other violent acts.

The humanitarian situation

29. The Somali people have continued to struggle with chronic food insecurity, poverty, disease, drought and severely limited educational and employment opportunities. Somalia's human development index remains one of the lowest in the world. About 400,000 Somalis are refugees in neighbouring countries, while up to 370,000 others are internally displaced.

30. Two good rainy seasons in 2002 have benefited rain-fed agriculture in the south of the country and improved conditions for livestock. As a result, overall cereal production reached a post-war high in March 2003, with an average 80 per cent increase nationwide. These developments have generally reduced acute food security problems, with some exceptions in the north-west, where drought conditions prevail, and in areas of the south, where conflict and lack of access are affecting the ability of some farmers to harvest their crops. The abundant rainfall has also reduced the incidence of cholera considerably.

31. It is anticipated that the 2004 harvest could be adversely affected by current floods in southern and central Somalia, in particular in areas along the Juba and Shabelle Rivers. However, so far the damage to farmland and levels of displacement appear to be minimal. United Nations agencies and their partners continue to monitor the situation and have pre-positioned relief supplies in the affected areas. Riverbanks have been strengthened and sluice gates along the Shabelle River have diverted water from areas under cultivation. The United Nations and the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Office have also provided equipment and funds to conduct aerial surveys.

32. The Sool, Sanaag and Bari regions, however, continue to suffer the effects of successive years of drought and insecurity. Local authorities and humanitarian agencies have raised concerns regarding the situation of some 35,000 vulnerable pastoral people on the Sool plateau. The United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator

is making efforts to secure the necessary agreements from the "Somaliland" and "Puntland" authorities to conduct an inter-agency assessment of the areas. Other areas of continuing vulnerability include the central Mudug and Galgadud regions, the southern areas of the Bay region, and parts of the Lower and Middle Juba and Gedo regions.

33. While still fragile, relative stability in northern Somalia and, more recently, in some areas of the south has allowed cautious consideration of expanded operations in some areas. In "Puntland", United Nations agencies and their partners are taking measures to expand operations in support of peace-building, as well as to revitalize coordination mechanisms. In the Kismayo area, despite recurring incidents (see para. 26 above), local leaders have made efforts to improve security. As a result, several non-governmental organizations and the International Committee of the Red Cross have recently undertaken assessments with a view to re-establishing operations. The United Nations Development Programme and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs are initiating work in the area to complement the long-standing programmes of UNICEF, Muslim Aid and the Somali Red Crescent Society that provide assistance to some 15,000 internally displaced persons and destitute local populations. At the same time, humanitarian access continues to be hampered in many areas of southern and central Somalia due to prevailing insecurity.

34. In May the United Nations country team and its partners reviewed the 2003 Common Humanitarian Action Plan, as well as the international response to the United Nations Consolidated Appeal. They noted that considerable progress had been made in the delivery of humanitarian relief, the reintegration of refugees, the promotion of the rule of law through law enforcement training and judicial reform, and poverty reduction through increased remittance flows and livestock exports. However, only 24 per cent of the $77.8 million requested through the Consolidated Appeal has been funded thus far.

V. Operational activities in support of peace

35. Peace-building activities by United Nations agencies are focused on four strategic operational objectives of the country team: protection and human rights, provision of basic services, HIV/AIDS prevention and education. Progress in all four of these areas is ongoing through multi-agency, multisectoral peace-building initiatives focused on the enhancement of skills for Somalis, the provision of basic services and exchanges of technical personnel.

36. In the context of United Nations activities on HIV/AIDS, training centres, and the livestock trade, I am pleased to note the re-engagement of the World Bank with Somalia through its innovative project for low-income countries under stress. The World Bank is supporting the above-mentioned activities through United Nations agencies, as well as through a United Nations project on macroeconomic data collection, analysis and dialogue.

37. No additional contributions to the Trust Fund for Peace-Building in Somalia have been received subsequent to those reported previously (see S/2003/231, para. 36).

Protection and human rights

38. The country team's strategic objective of protection and human rights envisages a comprehensive and sustained advocacy campaign in respect of Somali leaders, including governing authorities, faction leaders, elders, religious representatives and civil society. In an open letter dated 22 April to Somali leaders, the United Nations Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator drew attention in particular to the plight of internally displaced persons in Somalia, sought their commitment to cease hostilities and protect vulnerable civilians and offered support and assistance for their endeavours in this regard. The country team has also developed a protection and human rights framework for Somalia, which outlines a multi-agency plan for the documentation of existing activities and interventions for the future.

39. United Nations agencies and their partners have completed a child protection study that provides quantitative and qualitative data on vulnerable and marginalized children and those engaged in exploitative labour in Somalia.

40. The youth broadcasting project has reached the end of its first phase. The project seeks to empower youth to claim their human rights and is focused on technical training and creating access to electronic media for 20 youth groups. Radio and video materials were aired in several parts of Somalia on topics selected by the youth themselves, including HIV/AIDS, female genital mutilation and other topics relevant to their daily lives. Development of the second phase of the programme is under way.

41. The improvement and strengthening of a formal and non-formal juvenile justice system, in conformity with international standards for child protection, has been identified as a priority by the local authorities working towards legal reform and juvenile justice in "Somaliland", as well as by partner organizations working on child rights and protection. Many children are presently being detained in prison alongside adults and are sometimes victims of violence and abuse. The local authorities, in cooperation with partners, have initiated several actions to address the problem, including setting up a Law Review Committee, a Training Committee and a Juvenile Justice Forum. The Law Review Committee is examining existing legislation, identifying gaps and outlining areas that call for the drafting of new laws. The Training Committee will draft a curriculum and organize training events for law enforcement officials to build their capacity on a number of key issues, including child rights and protection. The Juvenile Justice Forum will address broader issues relating to juvenile justice, including prevention of abuse, rehabilitation and restorative justice issues.

42. The annex to my report on children and armed conflict (S/2002/1299) lists Somali parties recruiting or using child soldiers, including the Transitional National Government, the Juba Valley Alliance, the Somalia Reconciliation and Restoration Council, the Somalia Reconciliation and Restoration Council — Mogadishu and RRA. Reports also indicate that children participated in the fighting in "Puntland" in the forces of Colonel Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed and Jama Ali Jama. Bearing in mind that in its resolution 1460 (2003) of 30 January 2003, the Security Council, inter alia, called on all parties to armed conflict to halt the recruitment or use of children, the country team is engaged in advocacy efforts to seek the commitment of Somali parties to end the recruitment and use of children.

43. Some 120 child soldiers have been rehabilitated and reintegrated into their communities, and have benefited from a programme of vocational training, conflict resolution and trauma counselling. In an effort aimed at developing grass-roots Somali demobilization capacities, the United Nations, together with local partners, is beginning a second phase of the child soldier rehabilitation project in Mogadishu, Merca and Kismayo. The project will provide reintegration and rehabilitation opportunities for an additional 420 former child soldiers.

44. United Nations agencies and their partners also conducted a data collection exercise to assess the impact of small arms and light weapons on children in the towns mentioned above, with the participation of children who were given the opportunity to discuss their experiences and views. The findings of the report will be disseminated throughout Somalia using various mediums, including radio and video programmes produced by young people being trained as youth broadcasters.

45. A study of knowledge, attitudes and practice relating to the dangers of landmines and unexploded ordnance in "Somaliland" has been finalized. United Nations agencies and their partners are working together in the field of mine risk education and have drafted a strategy for implementing activities and programmes in "Somaliland". Support for the Mine Action Centres in "Somaliland" also continues. An assessment of the possibility of extending the programme in "Puntland" was carried out in February 2003, with the Danish Demining Group concluding the landmine impact survey.

46. In the area of judicial reform, activities continue to focus on the establishment of institutions and the development of capacity within existing institutions. In law enforcement, the establishment of a professional civilian police force that is able to effectively contribute to the restoration of peace and gain the trust of the community is a priority. Awareness has been created among women's groups, human rights activists and judiciary and law enforcement agencies in connection with the challenges that poor women, internally displaced persons and minority groups face in obtaining justice in the existing legal institutions. Training has also been carried out to highlight the need for "complementarity" among customary law, Shariah law and international human rights instruments.

47. A rapid assessment of women's access to justice in Somalia revealed that women are generally disadvantaged under all the three systems of law in Somalia, namely, civil, customary and Shariah. Each of them offers some measure of protection, but all remain inadequate and contradictory to an extent, leaving women vulnerable and insufficiently protected. Furthermore, the justice systems have an almost negligible number of women in service. It is imperative, therefore, to put in place interventions that support the recruitment and involvement of women in the justice system.

Livelihoods

48. United Nations agencies have launched with local partners a number of intensive projects for employment in the north-west, north-east and Mogadishu, using a community contracting system. A pilot project employing 600 people (70 per cent women) in Mogadishu has proved successful.

49. In late April, with the assistance of United Nations agencies, representatives of the Somali business community, including livestock and meat traders, met with representatives of the Transitional National Government, "Puntland" and "Somaliland", as well as with representatives of importing countries of the Middle East, to discuss the development and export of Somali livestock and livestock products. Together they recommended the formation of a Somali livestock board to regulate the industry through an improved system of disease surveillance, inspection and certification, for both internal and external markets.

Provision of basic services to vulnerable communities

50. The reintegration and resettlement of refugees and water and sanitation programmes of individual agencies are central to providing essential services to vulnerable communities. It is estimated that approximately 34,000 refugees from Djibouti and Ethiopia will be repatriated to Somalia in 2003. The repatriation began in May and will place additional burdens on existing basic social services, especially in the north-east and north-west.

51. United Nations agencies and donors continue to work in the water and sanitation sector and have identified the rehabilitation of boreholes aged 15 years or more as a new priority. The participation of private sector management and investment in urban water systems is being encouraged to ensure sustainability. The country team and its partners have constructed urban water supply systems and new shallow wells, and rehabilitated rural boreholes and infrastructure. They have also rehabilitated wells and protected existing shallow wells from pollution. They provided technical support to a local water enterprise in Galkayo, rehabilitated 10 shallow wells in the Hamar Wayne district in Mogadishu, benefiting 7,200 people, provided improved water supply for 1,500 families in Qorily in the Lower Shabelle region and provided a community borehole to the village of Armo in the Bari region.

52. The country team is implementing the expanded programme on immunization strategy for Somalia. More than 100 fixed sites have offered daily tuberculosis, DPT, oral polio and measles vaccinations for children and tetanus toxoid vaccinations for pregnant mothers. After careful microplanning at the district level and extensive training for vaccinators and social "mobilizers", vaccination drives took place in regional capitals and, for the first time, in several district capitals. Additionally, two national immunization campaigns took place during the reporting period, in which more than 1 million children were vaccinated.

HIV/AIDS prevention

53. The country team is focused on action that breaks the silence on and reduces the stigma of HIV/AIDS, and seeks to establish a realistic assessment of the magnitude and scope of the epidemic in Somalia. A national HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases strategic framework is being prepared under the auspices of the Somalia Aid Coordination Body. The development of zone-specific HIV/AIDS plans of action on the basis of this framework and the conduct of a comprehensive HIV/AIDS prevalence study in Somalia remain priorities for 2003. United Nations agencies and their partners also seek to improve interventions to control sexually transmitted diseases and increase the awareness and response-

preparedness of communities. A communications strategy is being developed in parallel with this framework.

54. Two workshops were held on gender and HIV/AIDS for 60 policy makers in "Somaliland" and "Puntland". Capacity was enhanced for 15 HIV/AIDS counsellors at the Boroma Tuberculosis Hospital, through the provision of materials and equipment. United Nations agencies are also engaged in the evaluation of the syndromic management of sexually transmitted diseases. An inter-agency pilot multi-purpose centre, targeting youth and women with comprehensive services and activities such as youth development, capacity-building, psychosocial support and voluntary counselling and testing, is being developed.

Education and training

55. United Nations agencies and their partners accelerated the production and distribution of primary school textbooks and education kits as well as the finalization of manuscripts for textbooks on six subjects for grades five and six. A report on the adult literacy training needs of Somalia with accompanying proposals is close to completion, as well as the identification of possibilities for vocational and technical training.

56. A health sciences training institute will soon be opened by the "Somaliland" administration in Hargeisa, with United Nations multi-agency assistance. Efforts by a local women's organization, in collaboration with the Somali diaspora, to establish a community hospital with training facilities on the outskirts of Mogadishu are also being supported. United Nations agencies are assisting police training centres in the north-west and north-east whose curriculum emphasizes community-style policing and human rights concerns.

57. In March the health authorities from the south central, north-east and north-west areas of Somalia were brought together to sign a memorandum of understanding with the World Health Organization on the improvement of health-care delivery systems in all areas of Somalia, including efforts to foster an environment in which unified approaches, policies and strategies for combating common diseases could be developed.

VI. Observations

58. The Somalia National Reconciliation Conference at Mbagathi is about to enter its final phase, which will entail negotiations on the formation of an all-inclusive Government for Somalia. The international community has remained steadfast in its support for the Somali national reconciliation process under the auspices of IGAD, led by Kenya. The initiatives undertaken by the Kenyan Special Envoy for Somalia to revitalize the process merit the continued support of the international community.

59. The future of the reconciliation process continues to rest largely in Somali hands. The international community can only assist the Somali efforts and commitment to end years of conflict and deprivation. That is why I deplore the frequent violations by the Somali parties of their commitments to cease hostilities following the signing of the Eldoret Declaration on 27 October 2002 and the agreements of 2 and 4 December 2002 with regard to Mogadishu. IGAD's effort,

through the Ceasefire Monitoring Committee, to monitor implementation of the Eldoret Declaration, its appointment of a Coordinator of the Committee and the prompt decision of the African Union to dispatch monitors to Somalia in the near future should be commended. I call on all parties to refrain from hostilities and from any acts likely to increase tension during the national reconciliation process.

60. I have also witnessed with concern that some Somali leaders have absented themselves from the Conference, in some cases for almost two months, alleging insufficient representation or displeasure at the role of the IGAD Frontline States at the Conference. It is nevertheless encouraging to note that most of them have returned to the Conference to complete the second phase and to initiate the third and final phase. But the final results will be only as good as the substantive agreement reached by the Somalis themselves on the structures of future governance and their commitment to abide by the obligations they have accepted. An agreed overall political framework, a successful completion of the third phase with the formation of an all-inclusive Government and proven commitment to the ceasefire agreements would constitute a good basis for the international community to support the implementation of an eventual peace agreement in Somalia.

61. The IGAD Frontline States, as well as the international community at large, should narrow any differences they may have concerning the process. In my previous report I commended the IGAD Frontline States for the decision of their Foreign Ministers to meet at least once a month to discuss the progress made and the challenges faced in the effort to bring reconciliation and normalcy to Somalia (see S/2003/231, para. 53). However, since the first meeting, held in Addis Ababa on 2 February 2003, further Ministers' meetings have been repeatedly postponed. I must underline that at this critical juncture in the reconciliation process the sustained commitment of the Frontline States remains vital for the success of the Conference.

62. Efforts to initiate new programmes and maintain the pace of existing humanitarian assistance activities may be jeopardized if the modest requirements of the 2003 Consolidated Appeal are not met in a timely manner. To achieve peace and stability in Somalia, the international community needs to remain fully engaged. Although dismally low, human development index figures have remained steady for the past several years, indicating the positive effect of humanitarian aid and development assistance. However, without increased and sustained donor commitment, the outlook for Somalia remains grim. Any reduction in existing efforts, both for short-term relief and for the medium to long term, could upset the precarious balance achieved, with devastating effects, particularly on women and children. Donors are urged not to let the demands of other crises negatively affect the outlook for Somalia.

63. Furthermore, should the flooding caused by recent heavy rains intensify and result in widespread displacement and destruction of shelter and farmlands, a rapid disbursement of additional funds and assistance may be required to allow a timely and flexible response.

64. It remains imperative that in 2003 that the international community take advantage of the areas where relative peace and stability prevail to work with local and regional administrations in place in order to enhance access to basic services and promote wider rehabilitation in support of peace-building.

65. The generous financial contribution of the European Union and the sustained engagement of envoys from its member countries, as well as those of the IGAD Partners Forum, the African Union, the League of Arab States and other actors, underscore the commitment of the international community to encouraging a negotiated end to the conflict and supporting the establishment of an all-inclusive interim Government in Somalia. I welcome, in addition to the contributions of Ireland, Italy and Norway to the Trust Fund for Peace-Building in Somalia (ibid., para. 36), the early contributions of Canada, Denmark, Norway, Switzerland and the European Community to the 2003 Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Somalia. I call on other donors to contribute generously to the appeal, and to do so without delay so as to allow the effective implementation of a full, coherent and balanced humanitarian and peace-building programme.

66. I would like to commend my Representative, Winston Tubman, the staff of the United Nations Political Office for Somalia, the country team and many non-governmental organizations for their efforts in support of national reconciliation and peace in Somalia, as well as for their dedication to the humanitarian and reconstruction needs of the country.